Strategies to help organise your writing and avoid plagiarism

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Breaches of academic integrity happen when students:

- Plagiarise authors they have read
- Work together & submit the same work independently
- Copy another student’s work
- Buy, are given, or steal essays & submit them
- Take notes into exams, or have someone else sit the exam
- Make up references or data
- Hide library books, cut out pages or delete texts
- Lie about medical conditions to get extensions
- Have someone make major editing and proof reading corrections to assignments

Zeegers et al (2008: 106)
What is plagiarism?

The University of Queensland definition:
"Plagiarism is the act of misrepresenting as one's own original work the ideas, interpretations, words or creative works of another. These include published and unpublished documents, designs, music, sounds, images, photographs, computer codes and ideas gained through working in a group. These ideas, interpretations, words or works may be found in print and/or electronic media."
A word of caution:

“One of the strongest demographic correlations with academic misconduct in the United States is with language.”

- ESL students more often in trouble for academic dishonesty than native speakers
- ESL students more likely to be caught than native speakers

Why?

- Fear of losing meaning
- Difficulty with language/paraphrasing skills
- Cultural differences?

“In the University of California, international students make up 10% of the student body but comprise 47% of academic dishonesty cases.”

Some interesting facts:

- 2/3 of teachers in a survey in the US attributed plagiarism to poor time management.

- There is a strong link between a very active extra curricular life and academic dishonesty including team membership, socialising, and other forms of entertainment like TV watching.

- One study found that students who are dishonest in class are more likely to engage in fraud and theft on the job when they enter the workplace!
In brief, you plagiarise when you:

- Use another’s work and *do not reference* the source, for example:
  * you copy without using quotation marks
  * you summarise without referencing the author’s name
  * You use/develop someone else’s idea without referencing it
  * You use experimental results without referencing where they came from
What do you think?

1. If you rewrite the argument from an article in your own words, are you still expected to provide a reference?
   Yes, you still need to acknowledge where you got your ideas from.

2. A friend says that you do not have to provide a reference for a statistic because a statistic is just a fact and not someone’s ideas. Are they correct?
   No, it’s still someone else’s work and the reader will want to know where you got your information from to assess its credibility.

3. Even if they contain specific, factual material, introductions to essays are not required to have references in them.
   False

4. If you write a general overview of the main ideas that you have got from reading a number of different articles, are you required to provide references?
   Yes, you are still using some else’s ideas.
But aren’t I *supposed* to use the ideas and results of other people in my writing?

Yes, to develop a credible and informed opinion, you *must* build on and use the works of other people.

The other important thing is that you “transform” the work of others so that you can say of your writing, “that is my work, not just a summary of the work of others.”
**Intentional vs careless plagiarism**

- If found to be intentional, the penalties can be quite severe, including exclusion from the university.

- There are penalties, such as loss of marks, even for “careless plagiarism”, which may arise from being lazy or careless about using sources appropriately.

- For more information, see the full policy at: [http://www.uq.edu.au/hupp/index](http://www.uq.edu.au/hupp/index).
It can be unintentional when….

- “I couldn’t think of a better way to explain it”
- Inadequately referencing multiple points from one author
- Inadequately referencing ideas from more than one author in one sentence.

But it is important to sort it out
- Ignorance is no defence
Referencing multiple points from one author:

Use signal words and phrases to show the reader that the points belong to the same author:

- According to Jones (2007), working in teams has the following advantages and disadvantages. The advantages include such things as …. In contrast to these potential benefits, working in teams may result in disadvantages such as ….

- According to Smith (2005), there are three main problems with this approach. Firstly, it neglects, … Secondly, …. Finally, this approach may result in ….

- Jayt (2006) argues that……… She also suggests that……… In addition she emphasises the fact that….
More signal words

- **Similar ideas** - similarly, in the same way, along similar lines
- **Different ideas** – on the other hand, by contrast, alternative views suggest
- **Results** – therefore, consequently
- **Lists** – firstly, additionally, a further example
- Also **pick up words** used earlier and use **pronouns (this, these, those..)** to help link
Referencing ideas from more than one author in one sentence:

- Smith’s (1994) theory about the acquisition of faith suggests…….while other factors include….., nevertheless there is agreement that the principles of ..... and....are necessary preconditions.

- Smith’s (1994) theory about the acquisition of faith suggests…….while Jones (2005) suggests other factors which include….., nevertheless there is agreement (Jones, 2005; Smith, 1994 and White, 2006) that the principles of ..... and....are necessary preconditions.
It gets worse when…..

A paraphrase is so close to the original that it is considered to be plagiarism even when you have referenced the source!

You plagiarise yourself!
- By handing in the same assignment for two different subjects
Students frequently overuse direct quotations in taking notes, and as a result they overuse quotations in the final research paper. Probably only about 10% of your final manuscript should appear as directly quoted matter. Therefore you should strive to limit the amount of exact transcribing of source materials while taking notes (James, 1976:46-47).

**Plagiarised version**

Students often use too many direct quotations when they take notes, resulting in too many of them in the final research paper. In fact, probably only about 10% of the final copy should consist of directly quoted material. So it is important to limit the source material copied while taking notes.
When *paraphrasing* an author’s work:

- Write without looking at the original
- Use your own words and style of writing
- Aim to keep the length similar or shorter
- Capture the meaning of the original
‘Students frequently overuse direct quotations in taking notes, and as a result they overuse quotations in the final [research] paper. Probably only about 10% of your final manuscript should appear as directly quoted matter. Therefore you should strive to limit the amount of exact transcribing of source materials while taking notes’ (James, 1976:46-47).

Your turn!

**Summarised:**
Students should take just a few notes in direct quotations from sources to help minimise the amount of quoted material in a research paper.
“Plagiarism is the act of misrepresenting as one's own original work the ideas, interpretations, words or creative works of another. These include published and unpublished documents, designs, music, sounds, images, photographs, computer codes and ideas gained through working in a group. These ideas, interpretations, words or works may be found in print and/or electronic media (University of Queensland, 2007).

- Plagiarism is the process of claiming as one’s own original work the thoughts, interpretations, words and creative thinking of another. This includes published and unpublished manuscripts of any kind as well as ideas gained through group work. This applies to both print and electronic media (University of Queensland, 2007).

- We are guilty of plagiarism anytime when we claim ownership directly or indirectly of someone else’s work. This applies to published and unpublished documents as well as to ideas from all sources such as computer codes, plans, sounds, images or even ideas from discussion groups.
Avoiding plagiarism

Reduce the amount of *direct* paraphrasing you have to do

Rather, take notes (wherever possible) at a distance from the text

But how?
Taking notes ‘at a distance’

- Develop *research questions* for your assignment:
  - What are the key issues in this topic?
- As you read, *look for answers* to your research questions
- Write *key words* in the margin or on a piece of paper for each relevant paragraph
- *Read* the whole article *before* you write long hand notes
- *Record* information *under research questions* or headings *after* you have finished reading the article
Example:

Essay topic:
“Plagiarism has now reached endemic proportions and should be punished by automatic exclusion”. Discuss.

Research questions:
– What is plagiarism?
– Is it on the increase?
– Why do people plagiarise?
– What types of penalties reduce it?
– What are the different types of plagiarism?
– How widespread is it?
– Are some types less dishonest than others?
Plagiarism of printed material has long been considered academic misconduct, punishable in forms varying from mild reprimands to expulsion from the institution in which it occurs. However, the advent of the “information age,” as well as access to website-based resources (ranging from journal abstracts to entire papers, visual materials, and commentaries), broadens not only the field of resources, but also the problems associated with their access and use. For decades, guidelines have defined plagiarism broadly as the public misrepresentations of work as original, or any activity in which a person knowingly or unknowingly and for some form of gain, represents the
work of another as his/her own (Decoo, 2002; Lindey, 1952; Office of Research Integrity [ORI], 1994; Office of Science and Technology Policy, 2000). Martin (1994) specifies multiple kinds of plagiarism, from plagiarism of authorship (whole documents) to word-for-word plagiarism (unacknowledged use of whole phrases or paragraphs), paraphrasing plagiarism, and plagiarism of secondary sources. He raises the intriguing issue that most concern in academe is centered on the least serious of these. The least serious (in his estimation), word-for-word plagiarism, is the easiest to detect and the most frequently punished; the most difficult to detect (plagiarism of authorship) is least frequently punished because it is most difficult to find and prove.
Note taking after reading:

- **What is plagiarism?**
  - Martin (1994) – types: authorship, word for word, paraphrasing, secondary sources in RZ

- **Is it on the increase?**
  - Robinson-Zanartu (2005) – more opportunities

- **Why do people plagiarise?**
  - Ignorance (R-Z 2005)
Group similar questions together:

– What is plagiarism?
– Is it on the increase?
– Why do people plagiarise?
– What types of penalties reduce it?
– What are the different types of plagiarism?
– How widespread is it?
– Are some types less dishonest than others?
– What does exclusion mean?
– Is it more prevalent in some groups than others?
Think and plan (concept map) before you write:

Your plan should be detailed and should show:
- Authors and dates
- Which authors have similar ideas
- Which authors differ (and how)
- Your critical comments (PMI + Gaps)

Advantages of detailed plans:
- Help define flow of ideas
- Help you discover themes or main ideas
- Give you a place to write from that is not close to the text
- Focus thinking on the topic
- Help you think about topic sentences in relation to the topic
- Give you a reference point for new ideas as you write
Critiquing and commenting:

- Essential part of academic writing
- Takes focus off simply explaining authors’ ideas
- Is part of developing an argument or having a ‘voice’
- Advances knowledge – you can do this!
Sands (2006: 95) argues that music is a key feature of rituals for people across cultures. Briggs (2004:12) agrees and claims that all rituals have certain musical features at their core.

Sands (2006:95) and Briggs (2004:12) argue that music is at the heart of ritual, however neither of these authors explain why music is essential, nor do they examine how different types of music might be used by different cultural groups.
Adopt a thinking not “cut and paste” approach to writing the assignment:

- **Cut and paste:**
  - Which ‘quotes’ do I want to use?
  - How many words do I need for that idea?

- **Thinking approach:**
  - What are the main issues I want to discuss?
  - What is my thesis or controlling idea?
  - What will I say in this paragraph and how will I link it to the thesis and topic?
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**Thinking approach:**
- What are the main issues I want to discuss?
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- What will I say in this paragraph and how will I link it to the thesis and topic?
“Plagiarism has now reached endemic proportions and should be punished by automatic exclusion”. Discuss.

- **Cut and paste intro:**
  - Plagiarism of printed material has been a problem for many years and has been punished in a variety of ways. Technology has made it easier for students to plagiarise than ever before. This essay will examine how common plagiarism is and what the best forms of punishment are.

- **Thinking intro:**
  - While it may be an exaggeration to suggest that there is currently an epidemic of plagiarism, there is little doubt that it is an important concern for educators and that there is an urgent need for it to be addressed, particularly in universities. Since the topic has received little research attention until recently, it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which plagiarism has increased, however
UQ library on plagiarism:

• To avoid plagiarism, you must *give credit* whenever you:
  • **Quote** from actual spoken or written words
    • **Use** another person's **ideas**, opinions, or theories in an assignment or essay
    • Make **use of information**, such as statistics, graphs, drawings, that are not common knowledge
  • **Paraphrase** another person’s spoken or written words

• To avoid unintentional plagiarism:
  • **Use quotation marks** around everything that comes directly from a text or article
  • Try to **summarise** ideas and arguments in your **own words** - don’t just rearrange a few words here and there
  • Check that you have correctly paraphrased and acknowledged the original ideas
  • Check your summary against the original text

(UQ Library Homepage)
Turnitin (www.turnitin.com)

- You can use Turnitin to identify inadvertent plagiarism *before you hand in your assignment*

- Lecturers can use Turnitin reports to *identify plagiarism*.

- *Allow time* before you hand in to give the system time to generate a report.
Turnitin is only available if your lecturer makes it available on a Blackboard website for your course.
Accessing the Turnitin report

To view report, click here
Can Mental Attitude Affect Biological Disease?

EXAMPLE ONE

In this essay, the evidence for and against the view that mental attitude can affect biological disease will be discussed. Evidence that a negative attitude can have a negative affect will be discussed first and the evidence that a positive mental state can have a positive effect will be discussed second.

Experiments

at England’s Medical Research Council Common Cold Unit have shown that

volunteers exposed to cold viruses and who had experienced a stressful life event in the previous six months (such as death of a loved one, divorce or a layoff), developed worse colds than those volunteers who had not (Totman et al. cited in Dixon, 1986). Schleifer et al. (cited by Dixon, 1986) have also found that the husbands of wives who had recently died from breast cancer suffered lower immune system responses for up to 14 months after the death of their wives, and that depressed patients also had lower immune system
What do you think?

Mosis referenced in the text each time he referred to an author’s ideas. Each time he wrote the ideas of an author, he was careful to change at least one or two words per sentence. He included all authors he had referred to in his reference list.

His lecturer gave him zero on his assignment, claiming that he had plagiarised.

Guilty?
What do you think?

Marcia referenced all the direct quotes in her assignment, but did not reference the ideas she had taken from texts when she had written them in her own words.

Her lecturer was unimpressed.

mean lecturer or academic rigor?
What do you think?

Fernando was delighted to see that an author he read had similar ideas to his own with regards to his assignment topic. He wrote the ideas in his own words, but did not reference them.

The lecturer failed him because he did not reference sufficiently in his assignment.

Fair? or “killing” original thinking?
Conclusion:

- Take notes *after* you have read
- *Think* and plan what you want to say
- Focus on commenting/critiquing rather than reproducing
- Don’t use a cut and paste approach
- Seek help if you need it!
Where to go for help.

- For further help about plagiarism
- Consult the University’s policy on academic integrity and plagiarism (HUPP 3.40.12)
- Consult the Library – ask for or download their information sheet
- Consult Learning Advisors in Student Services
- If you are accused of plagiarism
  - Consult Student Help on Campus/Learning Advisors